

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

FILED

DEC 14 2016

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MO
ST. LOUIS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

TODD BECKMAN,
BLAKE LAUBINGER,
CALEB LAUBINGER,
KERRY ROADES, and
ZACHARY SMITH,

Defendants.

4:16CR528 AGF/PLC

) Title 18 U.S.C. §1201
) Title 18 U.S.C. §924(c)(1)
) Title 18 U.S.C. §2

INDICTMENT

COUNT ONE

Conspiracy to Kidnap

The Grand Jury charges that:

Beginning at a time unknown to the Grand Jury, up to and including on or about
November 21, 2016, through November 23, 2016, and continuing thereafter up to and including
the date of this indictment, in the Eastern District of Missouri and elsewhere,

**TODD BECKMAN,
BLAKE LAUBINGER,
CALEB LAUBINGER,
KERRY ROADES, and
ZACHARY SMITH,**

the defendants herein, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly and
willfully conspire to unlawfully confine, kidnap, abduct, and hold for ransom Ellis Athanas, and,
in committing or in furtherance of the commission of the offense, did willfully use a means,
facility, and instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce.

Overt Acts

In furtherance of said conspiracy and to achieve the objectives and purposes thereof, defendants and other persons known and unknown to the Grand Jury committed and caused the commission of the following overt acts in the Eastern District of Missouri and elsewhere:

1. In or about November 2016, defendants Todd Beckman and Blake Laubinger discussed that they needed to “get” victim Ellis Athanas.
2. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger surreptitiously entered victim Ellis Athanas’ residence at 7553 Woodland Avenue and waited for victim Ellis Athanas to arrive home. When victim Ellis Athanas arrived home, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger attacked victim Ellis Athanas and confined him with zip ties. Defendants threatened to kill victim Ellis Athanas if he screamed.
3. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger transported victim Ellis Athanas in a Dodge Ram rental truck from 7553 Woodland Avenue to 410 Cypress Drive, the residence of defendant Blake Laubinger.
4. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger confined victim Ellis Athanas with zip ties, handcuffs, and duct tape in the basement of 410 Cypress Drive.
5. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants Todd Beckman and Kerry Roades arrived at 410 Cypress Drive. Defendants Todd Beckman and Kerry Roades beat victim Ellis Athanas and pressed the barrel of a handgun to his head. Defendant Kerry Roades suggested they shoot victim Ellis Athanas, chop him up, and shrink wrap him. Defendant Todd Beckman responded that they should just shoot victim Ellis Athanas.

6. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants accused victim Ellis Athanas of stealing from defendant Blake Laubinger and demanded money from him.

7. On or about November 21, 2016, defendants Todd Beckman, Kerry Roades, Blake Laubinger, and Caleb Laubinger planned to obtain keys and titles to victim Ellis Athanas' vehicles so they could appropriate the vehicles.

8. On or about November 22, 2016, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger threatened that, if they did not get money from the parents of victim Ellis Athanas, they would kill him. Defendant Blake Laubinger repeatedly tased victim Ellis Athanas.

9. On or about November 22, 2016, defendant Todd Beckman went to a Lowe's home improvement store and purchased shrink wrap and a heat gun. Defendant Todd Beckman returned to 410 Cypress Drive, where he threatened to wrap victim Ellis Athanas in shrink wrap and shoot him.

10. On or about November 22, 2016, defendants engaged in calls via cellular telephone, a means, facility, and instrumentality of interstate commerce, to the parents of victim Ellis Athanas and demanded a ransom for his release. Among the ransom calls were interstate calls from 410 Cypress Drive, in the State of Missouri, to victim Ellis Athanas' mother in the State of Florida.

11. On or about November 22, 2016, defendant Kerry Roades returned to 410 Cypress Drive while the ransom calls were being made. Defendant Kerry Roades put a handgun to victim Ellis Athanas' head during the ransom calls and threatened to shoot him.

12. On or about November 22, 2016, defendants continued to assault victim Ellis Athanas by, among other things, beating and tasing him. Defendants Todd Beckman and Kerry Roades struck victim Ellis Athanas with a handgun.

13. On or about November 22, 2016, defendant Zachary Smith arrived at 410 Cypress Drive and participated in the assault of victim Ellis Athanas. Defendants Zachary Smith and Blake Laubinger tased victim Ellis Athanas.

14. On or about November 22, 2016, defendants Blake Laubinger and Caleb Laubinger removed victim Ellis Athanas from 410 Cypress Drive. Defendants transported victim Ellis Athanas in the Dodge Ram rental truck from 410 Cypress Drive to 905 Gregory, the property of defendant Todd Beckman, where they confined him in a shipping container. Defendant Todd Beckman put a handgun to victim Ellis Athanas' head and threatened to kill him.

15. On or about November 23, 2016, the parents of victim Ellis Athanas paid a ransom of approximately \$27,000 to defendant Todd Beckman. The mother of victim Ellis Athanas was made to travel interstate from the State of Florida to the State of Missouri to pay the ransom.

16. On or about November 23, 2016, defendants Todd Beckman and Blake Laubinger forced victim Ellis Athanas to sign a document and removed him from the shipping container. Defendants threatened to kill victim Ellis Athanas if he said anything to anyone.

17. On or about November 23, 2016, defendants transported victim Ellis Athanas in a "St. Louis Tan Co." van from 905 Gregory to the Gravois Bluffs shopping center, where they released him.

In violation of Title 18, United State Code, Sections 1201(a) and 1201(c), and punishable under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1201(c).

COUNT TWO

Possessing and Brandishing a Firearm in Furtherance of a Crime of Violence

The Grand Jury further charges that:

On or about November 21, 2016, through November 23, 2016, and continuing thereafter up to and including the date of this indictment, in the Eastern District of Missouri and elsewhere,

**TODD BECKMAN,
BLAKE LAUBINGER,
CALEB LAUBINGER, and
KERRY ROADES**

the defendants herein, acting together and with others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, did knowingly possess and brandish one or more firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence which may be prosecuted in a court of the United States; to wit: conspiracy to kidnap, as charged in Count One herein.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 924(c)(1) and 2, and punishable under Title 18, United States Code, Sections 924(c)(1)(A)(i) and 924(c)(1)(A)(ii).

FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

The Grand Jury further finds by probable cause that:

1. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), upon conviction of an offense in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1201 as set forth in Count One, the defendant(s) shall forfeit to the United States of America any property, real or personal, constituting or derived from any proceeds traceable to such violation(s).
2. Subject to forfeiture is a sum of money equal to the total value of any property, real or personal, constituting or derived from any proceeds traceable to such violation(s).
3. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(d)(1), and Title 28, United States

Code, Section 2461(c), upon conviction of an offense in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924 as set forth in Count Two, the defendant(s) shall forfeit to the United States of America any firearm or ammunition involved in or used or intended to be used in such violation.

4. Specific property subject to forfeiture includes, but is not limited to:

a. 410 Cypress Drive, Pacific, Missouri 63069-1820, a tract of land described as Lot 378, Hawthorne 1, Block 13, in Section 11, Township 43 North, Range 2 East, in Franklin County;

b. 905 Gregory Lane, Fenton, Missouri 63026, a tract of land in the Southwest Quarter of Section 27, Township 44 North, Range 5 East, in St. Louis County;

c. 2014 Ford F-150 Raptor - VIN: 1FTFW1R69EFD03224;

d. 1999 Ford "Tan Co." Van - VIN: 1FTRE14W3XHB18049 ;

e. 2011 Ducati Motorcycle - VIN: ZDM13BLW8BB001965;

f. 2016 Subaru VIN: JF1VA2M61G9831094;

g. .270 Savage Model 110 bolt action rifle (Serial# G2883);

h. Central Arms Co. Model 1929 .410 Shotgun;

i. Smith & Wesson M&P 15-22 .22 caliber rifle (Serial# DZV3934);

j. Rock River Arms AR-15 (Serial# KT1216968);

k. Remington 20-gauge model 1100 (Serial# L606129X);

l. Marlin .22 caliber model 795 (Serial# 91497958);

m. 44 Magnum Taurus (Serial# G0770088);

n. Remington 1100 12 gage Shotgun (Serial# L606129X);

o. .40 caliber smith and Wesson (Serial #HEY7283);

p. .380 caliber Keltec (Serial # J4L15);

q. .45 Colt (Serial# SF12436);

r. .45 caliber Glock 21 (Serial# XNU430).

5. If any of the property described above, as a result of any act or omission of the defendant:

- a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;
- b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;
- c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;
- d. has been substantially diminished in value; or
- e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

the United States of America will be entitled to the forfeiture of substitute property pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p).

A TRUE BILL.

FOREPERSON

RICHARD G. CALLAHAN
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Cristian M. Stevens, #48028MO
Assistant United States Attorney